

Committee Secretary
Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE Q 4000

Dear Committee Secretary

Re: Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018

I refer to the above Bill and would like to inform you that I am totally against the passing of this Bill.

No woman has been charged under the current law in many years. These laws are working. Abortions are available when they meet certain criteria. They are not a free for all, but then they should not be.

A foetus is a living human being. A baby born at 20 plus weeks is given every opportunity to live. We spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in neonatal nurseries and in researching how to perform surgery on babies in-utero to ensure that they have the best chance of survival. We train doctors and nurses to be able to perform complex procedures and to understand the care required to keep babies born early alive. We spend millions on equipment to allow exactly this to happen. And we offer support to any parents having a premature baby that they will receive the very best of care to ensure that their baby lives.

To be effectively killing a baby in the next room simply because they are not wanted is hypocrisy at it's most vile. Any baby born post 20 weeks in this day and age is born with a chance to survive. Not all do, but many come through with major medical intervention. Therefore, to terminate any pregnancy post 20 weeks effectively means that at birth, the baby has to be murdered. There is no other way of looking at it.

If it is ok to murder a baby between 20 weeks and 40 weeks simply because we have changed our mind about having a baby – why is it not ok to murder a baby at gestation plus 3 months? Maybe I didn't think they would give me as many sleepless nights as the baby has – why does my right as a woman stop at 40 weeks? Who makes these decisions? Will we have another Bill next year that extends this? We are playing God without the wisdom.

My daughter was born at 38 weeks gestation owing to some minor complications in my pregnancy. She survived with only requiring a few hours of oxygen in a humidicrib. So, if she was born and not given medical intervention, she would have survived. She was better for having the oxygen, but it was not essential. So if this had been a termination, what would have happened to her? She would not have died naturally. How are these babies (and don't let anyone tell you she was not a baby at this age) to be disposed of? How are they going to be killed?

An abortion for the mother's health in the first 14 weeks, the baby has no chance of survival. I do not believe that this is the ideal situation, but understand that natural terminations occur in this time period. A baby will not survive at this time outside the womb. I believe that we should be using this as a last resort in extreme cases, where there is no alternative. It should not be a right, but a medical procedure that is available should the mother or child need it. I have had friends who have had foetuses that will not develop as a baby should and they have made the decision to terminate the pregnancy. I have also had friends who have been told that they will have a baby with physical defects and these people have gone on to have the baby and they have been pleasantly

surprised to find out that the doctor/Obstetrician was wrong, very wrong. And the abnormalities that were seen in the womb are simply not there.

I also do not believe that anyone has either the right or should have legislative backing to kill a baby for social reasons. We have already seen so many countries where the practice of favouring one sex over another has created enormous social problems. No one sex should be seen as more favoured than another and no child should lose their lives because they are the wrong sex.

These are frivolous reasons and not based on any medical necessity. As such they should not be a consideration for the consideration of terminating a life.

If you are looking at ways of spending public money, then give more dollars to education in schools so that unwanted pregnancies are kept to a minimum. Give more counselling services and more support to women and men who are faced with these difficult decisions. Not just counselling to say that you have ticked the boxes, but real counselling that will actually assist the parents of the child. Give some more options – more support for the early years of the baby's life. Make parenting slightly less daunting than it sometimes is.

There is no need to turn Queensland into a killing field. This is being sold by the politicians who are supporting it as a great step forward for women. As a Queensland woman I believe it is a step backwards. There is no room in a civilised society to make the murder of children and adults of any age easier to access and to get away with.

Children are not commodities and the Department of Child Safety would not be in the mess it is currently in if the staff there understood that children were very complex little people and not mere collateral damage for their egos. But that is another story for another day.

I condemn this bill and sincerely hope that it will not pass parliament and become law in this state.

Regards

Margaret Harm

